matter in SAARC Foreign Ministers Meetings; and

(f) if so, whether there is any agreement on issue of Visas?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) The yearwise figures in respect of the visas issued to Pakistani nationals during the last three years are as below:—

1993	:	45927
1994	:	34574
1995	:	24218

Since the closure of Consulate General of India, Karachi in January 1995 at the request of Pakistan, visas are being issued only by the High Commission of India, Islamabad.

(b) Figures are not known as Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi does not provide this information.

(c) and (d) Pakistan has been following a restrictive visa regime for Indian nationals which includes pre-verification of visa applications on a case-by-case basis causing long delays and inconvenience to Indians desirous of visiting Pakistan.

(e) and (f) The issuance of visa by India and Pakistan to each other's nationals is a bilateral issue governed by the India-Pakistan Visa Agreement signed in 1974. Hence the matter has not been discussed in SAARC Foreign Ministers Meetings. SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme covers only specific categories of persons, including *inter alia* (i) Supreme Court Judges; (ii) Members of the National Parliament of each member State; and (iii) Minister of Foreign/External Affairs of each member State.

However, India has decided unilaterally to sizeably increase the number of entries to India.

राजमार्गों को सुधारने के लिए नई प्रौद्योगिकी

1133. श्री अजीत जोगी: क्या जल-भूतल परिवहन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या देश में राजमार्गों के सुधार हेतु नई प्रौद्योगिकी का प्रयोग करने के संबंध में कोई प्रस्ताव है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है;

(ग) क्या नई प्रौद्योगिकी उपलब्ध कराने में सहायता देने के लिए विदेशी विलम्बों को आमंत्रित किया गया है; और

(घ) इस संबंध में अंतिम निर्णय कब तक लिया जाएगा?

जल-भूतल परिवहन मंत्री (श्री टी.जी. वेंटरामन): (क) से (घ) देश में राजमार्गों तथा राष्ट्रीय राजमार्गों के सुधार के लिए जांच-पड़ताल, डिजाइन, निर्माण, यातायात नियंत्रण, परिवहन, सड़क और पुल प्रबंधन जैसे क्षेत्र में प्रौद्योगिकी का निरन्तर उन्नयन किया जा रहा है। आवश्यकतानुसार विदेशी विशेषज्ञों की सहायता भी ली जा रही है। चूंकि प्रौद्योगिकी उन्नयन एक सतत् प्रक्रिया है इसलिए किसी निश्चित समय के बारे में बता पाना संभव नहीं है।

Linking of Peninsular and Himalayan Rivers

1134. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have estimated the cost of inter-linking of various peninsular and Himalayan rivers; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, river-wise?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir. Very approximate cost of inter-linking of the various Peninsular Rivers and Himalayan Rivers as worked out by National Water Development Agency (NWDA) may be around Rs. 2, 30,000 crores including Power Component.

(b) Link wise cost can be available only after finalization of all feasibility reports.

Identification of Freedom Fighter

1135. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are several freedom fighters in the country who are not getting any pension from Government; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to identify such people and also grant pension for those freedom fighters?